

Here is the rub that every American of every political persuasion should be concerned with, and that every American family, millions of whom have lost a soldier in defense of our democracy, should be concerned with: Putin is trying to discredit the exact democracy that millions of our brothers and sisters have died for. Putin is a thug and a street punk. His attempt to hijack our democracy needs an aggressive and honest, independent investigation.

HONORING ELBERT BENNETT

(Mr. COMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize Mr. Elbert Bennett for his service as president of the Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association board of directors. Elbert, one of nine children, was born in Princeton, Kentucky. After graduating Caldwell County High School in 1967, he began working at The Times Leader newspaper in Caldwell County. He has accomplished much since starting at that newspaper.

Elbert held office in the Kentucky Young Farmers Association and was elected magistrate in 2002. Prior to this election, Elbert served 20 years on the Fredonia City Council. Elbert has been a lifelong cattle farmer, is the former president of the Fredonia Lions Club, and is an active member of the Cattlemen's Association.

Most recently, Elbert has given his time to the Wounded Warrior Project, cooking barbecue and hosting veterans on his farms. Elbert is widely known and respected as a barbecue cook, cooking for thousands at church events, Lions Club events and children's events.

In 2008, Elbert Bennett's peers elected him to the Kentucky Magistrates and Commissioners Association board of directors. He has held every office inside the State association, including sergeant-at-arms, secretary, treasurer, vice president, and president.

While president of KMCA, the association has had many legislative victories, including stabilizing essential 911 resources for cities and counties in Kentucky. One of Elbert's most notable accomplishments as president of KMCA is the association's annual children's shoe drive, which donates over 600 pairs of shoes annually to needy schoolchildren all across the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

He was recently elected to the Kentucky Association of Counties executive board as second vice president, where he represents the magistrates and commissioners.

I cannot speak highly enough about Elbert Bennett and how his service has positively influenced the First District and the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a whole. I am honored to recognize Elbert Bennett today and the great work he does for the people of our State.

LET'S FIX THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT TOGETHER

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a sincere suggestion to our Republican colleagues who are working hard to come up with a replacement for the replacement plan on health care that didn't fly.

Let's fix the Affordable Care Act and work together in a bipartisan way. I have always said: the best legislation is always bipartisan. Drop your plans to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. Stop undermining this law, and work with Democrats to make the law work better.

That is what the majority of Americans want us to do. Millions of people now have health insurance, thanks to the Affordable Care Act. Insurance companies can no longer refuse to insure people with preexisting conditions, and essential health benefits like maternity care and mental health care are now provided.

We know that no law is perfect. We acknowledge that. So let's do our job and do what the American public want us to do: join together in a bipartisan way to make the Affordable Care Act work better.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS HARMING OUR HEALTH

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Earth Day 2017 provides an important opportunity to raise awareness of the consequences of President Trump's executive action abandoning meaningful progress on climate. Left unchecked, climate change will continue to harm the health and safety of our communities. That is why the American Public Health Association declared 2017 as the Year of Climate Change and Health.

Seasonal changes, higher temperatures, droughts, and severe storms are leading to more heat-related illnesses and death, increased asthma attacks, and more severe allergies. The scientific evidence is clear: climate change endangers human health. The health harms of climate change led 11 medical societies to form the Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health, which recently issued a report titled: "Medical Alert! Climate Change Is Harming Our Health."

One of the consortium doctors said: "The worst-case scenarios of climate change really worry me. It would mean a level of human suffering we can hardly contemplate, much less respond to."

Mr. Speaker, we can't allow that to happen. This problem demands immediate action, not denial, and certainly not delay.

NATIONAL RETIREMENT PLANNING WEEK

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the nearly 50 million baby boomers about to retire. It is National Retirement Planning Week, and before I get to the importance of this effort, let me say, there are no more important foundational programs that sustain our seniors and retirees than Medicare and Social Security. These earned benefits are critical, as nearly half of all baby boomers saved nothing for their retirement.

Thank you to Representative JOHN LARSON from Connecticut for introducing the Social Security 2100 Act, which protects and strengthens Social Security for decades to come. I have long been an advocate for protecting workers' pensions, and, sadly, more Americans than ever before are shouldering the burden of financing retirement alone.

That is why we need a national conversation on retirement planning, and Congress should lead it. Far too many seniors find Social Security is simply not enough to live on. America must preserve Social Security, protect retirement accounts and pensions, and work with our constituents to make sure they have the resources they need to have a dignified retirement.

Thank you to the National Retirement Planning Coalition, whose fantastic online resources are available to all Americans free of charge. Let's get to work for our retirees.

In closing, let me also say hardest congratulations to Congressman STEVE STIVERS from the great State of Ohio, who has been just promoted to brigadier general in the Ohio National Guard. Onward, STEVE STIVERS. We are very proud of you on a bipartisan basis.

ELIMINATE SUNSET DATE OF VETERANS CHOICE PROGRAM

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 369, which will eliminate the sunset date of the Veterans Choice Program. The Choice Program gives the men and women who served this great Nation the ability to receive health care in their own home communities.

Instead of waiting for a VA appointment or traveling a long distance to a VA facility, our veterans can get services closer to home. The Choice Act states that the Department of Veterans Affairs is authorized to continue services until August 7, 2017, or until the funds provided under the Choice Act ran out, whatever occurs first.

There is still funding set aside for this program. Our veterans should be entitled to use it. That is why I support